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ABSTRACT

This report is focused on New Iberia, Louisiana, its school system, and a very brief background of the integration situation in the community. A sound-on-slide machine was utilized to present an introduction to the program and to introduce the panel. (The slides are described in detail.) A brief contextual background of the problem is given, including the counselor's evaluation of the situation, his yardstick for action, and his goals. The explosive reactions to change are then discussed. Factors that should have been considered are then presented, followed by a call for unity and redirection. Plans for progress and the conclusion summarize the situation as seen by the counselors. (KJ)

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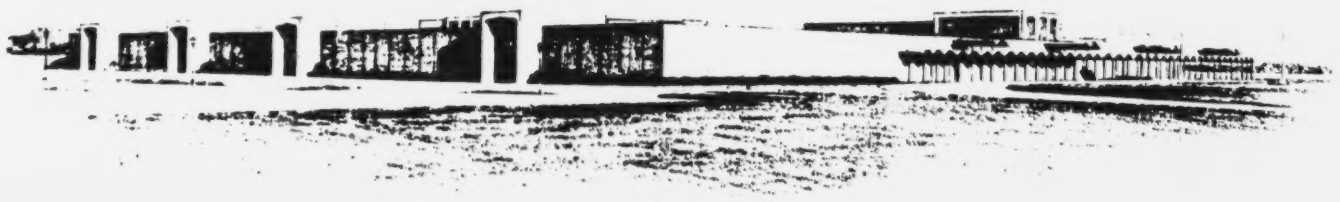
EDUCATION MINUS WHITE PREJUDICE PLUS BLACK POWER EQUALS GRAY MATTER



CG 005 487

EDUCATION–(WHITE PREJUDICE + BLACK POWER) = GRAY MATTER

A Panel

Presented to

The American Personnel and Guidance Association

New Orleans, Louisiana

by

Alma P. Moore

Fred E. Hoyer

Newton D. Thompson

Floyd A. Horton

Evelyn G. Terrell

March, 1970

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INTRODUCTION

A sound–on–slide machine was utilized to present an audio–visual introduction to the program. This was done in order to give the audience a visual concept of New Iberia, Louisiana, its school system and a very brief background of the integration situation in the community. The panel participants were also introduced through this medium.

The slide presentation was as follows:

Slide I – This is the city hall of New Iberia, Louisiana. It is located near the center of a community of approximately 36,000 people. New Iberia is known as the Queen City of the Teche–it is also called the "Sweetest, Saltiest, and Hottest" town in the United States. Of course, this is in reference to three of its main industries–sugar cane, salt mining, and Tabasco.

Slide II – "The Shadows" is located about one block from the city hall previously shown and is symbolic of the heritage of our community and region. We are presenting these pictures of our town to give you a visual background of the setting in which our situation developed.

Slide III – This intersection is in the heart of downtown New Iberia. Like many other communities, the downtown section is rapidly loosing its importance as the business houses move into more accessible quarters in the shopping centers. New Iberia is primarily an agricultural community with only the oil fields and its related companies serving as an industrial outlet.

Slide IV – The seal of New Iberia Senior High School was first seen three years ago when this new school plant was opened to occupancy. Last year NISHS served grades nine through twelve and there were approximately 1600 students enrolled.

Slide V – This is NISHS today. This totally self–contained building now has grades ten, eleven, and twelve. In school year 1968–69 this was a partially desegregated school under freedom of choice. It is now totally integrated. The student body now numbers in excess of 1800 students.

Slide VI – The seal of the former Jonas Henderson Senior High School still can be found in the entrance of what is now New Iberia Freshman High School JHSHS opened at the same time NISHS did and facility wise is comparable. As did NISHS the school, until this year, housed grades nine through twelve and the student body of 800 was entirely black under freedom of choice.

Slide VII – New Iberia Freshman High School, formerly JHSHS, now houses only grade nine and the student body still numbers approximately 800. This educational plant is completely integrated with a white–black ratio of three–to–one.

Slide VIII – This is the corner of Admiral Doyle Drive and Hopkins Street in New Iberia. If you were to proceed straight ahead in the direction you are looking you would arrive at NISHS. If you were to turn right at the intersection you would go to NIFHS. This is the spot where our community achieved some degree of infamy during the early part of the school year.

Slide IX – Title Slide
Education–(White Prejudice + Black Power) = Gray Matter
Background Music "Let There Be Peace"

Slide X – The chairman and originator of our program is Mrs. Alma P. Moore. Presently Mrs. Moore is serving as the girl's counselor at NIFHS. Last year Mrs. Moore served at JHSHS. Our chairman is a graduate of Xavier University of New Orleans and has been in the educational profession for twenty–three years, the last three as a counselor.

Slide XI – Our second speaker is Mr. Fred E. Hoyer. Mr. Hoyer is Mrs. Moore's co–counselor at NIFHS. This is his first year as a full time guidance area worker after working for seven years as a teacher. Mr. Hoyer's Bachelors and Masters degree were taken at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Slide XII – Mr. Newton D. Thompson is presently serving students as a counselor at NISHS. He is also serving the school as research and placement counselor. Last year, this University of Southwestern Louisiana graduate, worked at JHSHS. Mr. Thompson has been in the field of education for eight years.

Slide XIII – Our fourth panelist, Mr. Allen Horton, serves as junior counselor at NISHS. His educational credentials include the Bachelors and Masters degrees from Northwestern State College of Louisiana with additional work from U.S.L. Mr. Horton has served as a counselor for two years after being a teacher for thirteen years.

Slide XIV – Our final panelist is Mrs. Evelyn G. Terrell. Presently she is the tenth grade counselor at NISHS and has been working in guidance programs on a full time basis for three years after being a classroom teacher for twenty–three years. This counselor received her Masters degree from Louisiana State University and her Bachelors degree from the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Slide XV – Serving as recorder is Mrs. Henri Dougherty. Her present responsibility at NISHS is the senior students. She is a graduate of the College of the Sacred Heart and the University of Southwestern Louisiana. Her educational experiences cover a period of twelve years– the last three as a counselor.

After the audio–visual presentation the moderator gave the following brief presentation prior to actually presenting the first panelist;

Education–(White Prejudice + Black Power) = Gray Matter may be a somewhat strange algebraic title for a panel of counselors to present but it expresses what we are striving to achieve in our schools. In order to arrive at our ultimate goal of fully educating the youth of our community in a time of trial and stress we have worked up this program to familiarize other educators in the United States with our unique problems and how we as a group of counselors are attempting to work through these problems to a solution.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Rationale: Because of traditional and newly adopted ideologies and philosophies, some Whites as well as some Blacks can't seem to accept the schools in Iberia Parish. (County) Negative reaction has been manifested in diverse ways by adults and by students. In some instrances, punitive measures have been disastrous to the latter. Misunderstanding, mistrust, denials of human dignity and worth, and other apparent and hidden pressures have challenged Guidance and Counseling personnel to exercise ingenuity and professionalism in seeking environmental improvements.

Counselors' Evaluation of the Situation:

1. The total integration of all public schools in Iberia Parish (County) has created a stress situation for which many are not psychologically or "socially" oriented.
2. This has caused some to use unacceptable means of "striking out" to eliminate or to reduce factors with which the ego is unable to cope.
3. Improved tools and techniques are requisites for helping everyone (parents, teachers, and students) adjust to the new school experiences.
4. The situation is critical enough to demand cooperative efforts, plans, and programs from both Blacks and Whites.
5. Education is the discipline that has the major responsibility of assuring a chance for maximum development of the American masses through provision of opportunities for the individual. It must stimulate an awareness of and an appreciation for human dignity; it must also teach respect for individuality, acceptance of uniqueness.
6. Ours is not the task of vainly trying to eliminate differences among men; but rather of arousing an acute awareness of the differences and how, because of this each must aspire to use his own initiative for personal actualization, and must abstain from jeopardizing this chance for others.

Counselors' Yardstick for Action:

1. Work to lessen/eliminate the major a causal factors of explosive of injurious reaction i.e. prejudices, mistrust, hatred, self–contempt, etc.
2. Help to create an environment in which each can make positive progress.
3. Involve all who can and will contribute to efforts to encourage mutual understanding and cooperation.
4. Use individual potentials, needs, and interests for progressive change. Use also the major social problems and ills of our American society for stimulating the incentive to effect, peaceably, necessary change.
5. Suggest and support revisions in educational and/or training programs that can provide better opportunities for the "deprived" and the disillusioned.

Counselors' Goal:

To create an environment in which each, both individually and collectively, can develop according to his potentials, interests, and needs without being hampered by unnecessary harmful "pressures".

TOO QUICK CHANGES RESULTED IN EXPLOSIVE REACTIONS

Perhaps to some of you this title may seem a little misleading "too quick changes"--deep down we knew that it was only a matter of time before we would have to solve our intergration problems.

Regardless of what beliefs are held by you, the facts are that to us the changes were quick and the reactions were explosive.

We, the counselors, as well as other school personnel, found ourselves unprepared for the dynamic change. As counselors we did not anticipate any drastic reprecussions from this consolidation.

Naively we believed that the schools could operate with little or no procedual changes. Our patterns had been set from precious years, and we sincerely visualized not conflict resulting from curriculum changes, school clubs, and other extra-curricular activities. This is not to say that there was not a great deal of apprehension about the new school environment--there was, but why shouldn't methods used successfully in the past not work now?

In order to better understand what happened, it will be necessary to digress a bit.

Throughout the 1968-1969 school year we operated under a freedom of choice court order. As the school year drew to a close freedom of choice torms were distributed to all students as in the past and the high schools of the parish conducted normal pre-registration..

In April, 1969 the courts ruled that freedom of choice would no longer be acceptable as a method of school selection and the school board was ordered to submit an acceptable alternate plan.

The school year ended. Jonas Henderson Senior High re-registered most of their students on an "if this should happen" basis. There was no time to register those six graders who were going to Junior High nor was there time to register those students going into the ninth grade from the two feeder schools.

School personnel closed schools without the slighest idea of what the coming school year would be like. All school board employees spent the entire summer writing for someone to decide how best to achieve a "non-segrated school system".

At various times last summer three agencies prepared plans for integration. Each plan had merit depending upon who the originator was. Among those plans offered were:

1. HEW's plan which was strickly geographical zoning.
2. The NAACP's plan which was similar to HEW's but with slight modifications.

3. The school board's first plan which was a combination of zoning and consolidation.

4. The school board's freedom of choice plan.

5. The school board's modified zoning–consolidation plan.

The school board had previously scheduled school to begin August 25, 1969. The court was approached for permission to delay this starting date but refused to consider this action.

On or about August 11, 1969, the court approved the Iberia Parish School Board's third plan since it abolished segregated schools and met the requirements of HEW.

The school board had evidently taken no action on facility and personnel assignment. It took another week before some sort of school assignments took place. In most cases, the schools had only five days to assign rooms, prepare master schedules, compile duty rosters and do the other household chores necessary for proper school operation. Included in these five days was a scheduled two day mandatory workshop in a neighboring town.

The counselors, not sensing any emergency, failed to unite and make plans for orienting the two races to their new educational environment. The reactions by the public to the new arrangements were not surprising. The blacks objected because they were being deprived of people in administrative positions and the whites objected because they wanted freedom of choice.

The blacks staged two or three non–violent protest marches on the school board at various times, but to no avail.

The whites reacted by threatening to boycott the schools, by establishing a private school, by creating an organization attempting to block the court order, by attempting to have a recall election of the school board, and by organizing a vigilante committee whose major goal was to assist the local authorities maintain law and order if necessary. This group staged a protest march in early November and appeared on the scene at the last disturbance. Presently there is in circulation a partition attempting to recall a local sales tax for school personnel salaries; this they hope will force the closing of the public schools. These actions are not by the majority but by a very vocal minority.

The scene is thus set for the opening of school session 69–70.

On August 19, the principals reported to their respective schools along with the counselors and a trickling of teachers. Rooms had to be assigned, master schedules had to be prepared and checked, some sort of registration had to take place, and classes had to be compiled. With all these housekeeping chores facing us we neglected to consider the well being of the student. At no time was there a proposed meeting of the counselors. We were not strangers to each other for we had met monthly throughout school year, 68–69, yet for some unexplained reason, no counselor suggested we meet as a group and discuss mutual problems.

The administration evidently felt no need for such a meeting as no request of this nature was made; also it should be noted that no one felt the need of familiarizing the students with their new educational environment.

The week went swiftly by, we did our administrative chores as best we could.

On August 28, the students reported to school; schedules were issued and the students went to their respective classes. It was a tiring day, but it seemed to have worked well. Most of us went home with a feeling of accomplishment.

The second day progressed as most school days do; there may have been a little more apprehension, but nothing any of the counselors felt unusual. Toward the end of the day a fight erupted. The usual methods of breaking up the fight were used, but this only provoked more violence. The disturbance was eventually quelled, but the student body remained very restless. The black students banded together and began chanting outside the principal's office. It became obvious that methods used successfully in the past could no longer be used.

The third day was chaotic--again this was the result of a minority, but the reprecussions were felt by everyone.

Groups of black students attacked white students as they came off the bus before school. The reason as yet is undetermined. The police had to be called to help restore order. The radio, sensing a major story, over reported, causing the community--both black and white--to converge on the school, withdrawing their children.

In the meantime, a group of black students met with the administration in the auditorium where they vented their grievances. Order could not be restored and the principal told the group to return to class or leave the school grounds. They chose to leave school and proceeded to march toward town. Word spread that this group planned to go to the New Iberia Freshman High School (formerly Jonas Henderson Senior High School, an all Black school) and take over the building. The police broke up the march but not before one of our local radio stations had aired the news very dramatically thus increasing the tension in the community. By this time parents became panicky and children were literally grabbed out of school. Shortly before noon many of the schools no longer had students. The only school to remain open in town was the Senior High.

A curfew was enforced by the local officials and the town was quiet. Schools resumed their normal schedules the next day, but absenteeism was high. Because of this unrest it was approximately one month before all students reported back to school. As a direct result of this incident, we have had an unusual number of dropouts and transfers.

The high school slowly returned to an everyday routine; then on November 5 a fight erupted between two groups of boys in the bathroom at Senior High. It was quickly broken up. On November 6 more fights broke out before school. Police once again were called to quell the disturbance. The vigilantes showed up to add to the confusion and once again parents withdrew their children from school.

On November 7 groups of students refused to go to class and were allowed to go to the auditorium where grievances were presented to the principal. This was done in an orderly manner and then the students returned to class undisturbed. By Monday, November 10, school was back normal.

We have militants on both sides; both white and black. Their purpose is to disrupt the educational system of our parish. These groups have no desire to unite; for whenever there is a uniting force they do their best to destroy it.

Hind sight will not help us, we made mistakes; but to you out there who must yet face this task, our experiences and mistakes should be beneficial.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ATTENTION.

Mr. Fred Hoyer

FACTORS THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED

My task differs from that of my fellow counselors in that they have told you how it was and how it is, but I shall tell you the way we feel it should have been. Yet, before we analyze the whole school system, let us look at its parts, in particular our part as counselors. We had been holding, first, occasional meetings, then monthly meetings two years prior to this school year. Yet within this time we did not study, we didn't talk about, nor did we discuss methods of dealing with anticipated problems resulting from integration. As a result of this complacency, you see before you a group of counselors who had to first be counseled in order to counsel. We had to examine our own prejudices, our own customs and our own inadequacies in order to perform the role to which we were appointed.

This period of self-analysis should have been done prior to the court order so that mutual modifications could have occurred through our awareness of our true self. This type of self-analysis would have allowed us to react immediately to the problematic experiences of our clients.

We also feel that the following administrative factors should have been considered because whatever is done by the school administrators, directly affects all the students, the teachers, the parents, and other school personnel. Therefore, their acts will directly affect guidance and counseling.

From this point of view, we feel that all principals should have been consulted concerning the plans of integration and also advised on methods of dealing with various problems resulting from implementing these plans.

Then the principals prior to the opening of school should have met with their faculties to discuss policies of the school, possible classroom problems and methods of dealing with those problems.

All other school personnel should have had similar meetings.

The counselors should have requested the first few days of school as a period of orientation because any new situation creates a feeling of insecurity, whether it involves an adult changing employment or a child changing schools. In all these situations there are "rules of the road" to learn; there is a need to become acquainted with the new environment and bridge the gap between the old and the new.

Orientation can create a sense of belonging and an understanding of the goals and purposes of the new activities.

This is a two–way process that could have helped the student become effective in his new situation and could also have helped the school and its staff become aware of the needs and developmental levels of their students. Of course orientation is a continuous process which could have served to initiate rapport among the faculty as well as initiate student adjustment.

It is our feeling also that if a series of articles were written from the school administrator's point of view to inform the parents and ask for their cooperation, suggestions, and support, this would have helped to prepare the people for the change.

As you can readily see, these are common pre–school activities in most school systems, but since we did not do this and violence erupted, there was a call for unity and redirection. We are here in answer to that call.

Mr. Newton D. Thompson

A CALL FOR UNITY AND REDIRECTION

New Iberia Senior High School had now been faced with the problem of Redirection and Unification as it had never been before. True, we had faced these problems before. The causes and immediate attention had never been so drastic nor so sudden, however.

The first major step was the adjustment of schedules and credits. This was necessary because of different requirements for graduation, different years in which some courses could be scheduled, and different methods used in gaining credit for a subject. In most cases it meant more credits and/or more elective–subjects for those transferring into New Iberia Senior High School. At this time all possible leniency was allowed so that every student would be taking what he wanted and needed. This process took about three school weeks and somewhat contributed to our confusions.

Our guidance committee, which serves as the communicative factor between the administrators, the classroom teachers, and the counselors, was added to with the ratio of two whites to one black. At the close of the previous school year the project for this year had been preparing for the Southern Associations Evaluation Committee. This was now changed to an overall project of trying to bring about a smooth transition for the faculty and student body.

It was also decided that our monthly parish counselor meetings should include problems and solutions of similar situations. From this inter–change we could benefit from the experiences of others as well as keeping abreast with the current parish situation. The weekly counselor staff meetings at New Iberia Senior High have also been as directed to the unification of student body and faculty. From this have come requests for administrative changes which the administrators have accepted as being most beneficial to improving our school. Such suggestions as group counseling have been accepted readily. Counselors began going into classes to discuss problems facing the students. Results have been encouraging from both students and teachers who have participated. A faculty intra–relations committee composed of three black and three white teachers has been formed to seek out ways of improving the school. The more important of these findings will be brought up before the whole faculty. A parent's workshop for incoming ninth graders was suggested and was held this winter. One of our four counselors will be allowed to spend most of his time at the ninth grade school advising and counseling, not only the incoming students, but the ninth grade counselors in such a way as to help them to better understand what's in store for these students.

Most of the following belongs entirely to the credit of the administrative department. However, since it was a vital necessity toward unifying our school and some advice was received from individual counselors, it should be discussed. The student government personnel of New Iberia Senior High had been elected during the previous spring. This election for Henderson Senior High had been postponed pending the outcome of the court's action. It was felt the best method of incorporating was to invite known leaders from Henderson into the Jacket Assembly even though this was not covered in the Constitution. It was felt an election would lead to block voting with the resulting factor being an all-white student government. With this selective method it was felt that the black student could prove his capabilities to the white majority and gain, rightfully so, enough support to be elected this spring on their own merit when the full Constitution will go back into effect.

The marching squad, the Jackettes, had been selected by pre-determined qualifications during the previous spring. This was opened to those from Henderson who wished to try out under the same qualifying methods. Approximately 10 tried out and four were accepted. The selecting of cheerleaders had been completed at both schools during the previous years. Those who had been elected at Henderson were invited to attend practices. Two did so and became part of the cheerleader squad.

The homecoming court was elected by the football team as it always had been in the past. From this election came one queen and five maids, one of the latter was a Black student from Henderson.

Class elections which are normally held in the fall were held according to schedule. Requirements for qualifying and the deadline were followed according to the school by-laws. Because of a missunderstanding of this deadline some sophomore candidates who had submitted their names too late were not on the ballot. Since these were transfer students some felt that an injustice had been done. Even though the ballots had been counted, new ones were drawn up and the election held over. It was decided that only a plurality was needed therefore splitting much of the white vote and the electing of some black officers. The same thinking was used as that in the student government selections. The next election will therefore be determined by a majority vote. One of our first problems to be faced concerning extra-curricular activities came when our own Sugar Cane Festival decided that only white FFA judging teams were allowed. Since one member of our team was black the administration responded with the statement that to the effect said that we all went or none would go. The person who made this ruling changed his mind and we all went.

A method brought to New Iberia Senior High School from Henderson Senior High was a student monitoring system. This proved very successful in our traffic flow between classes and enabled our lunch

lines to function better. The students liked the idea and it removed many tensions created when the faculty was responsible for this duty.

Probably one of the most unifying events to take place was the results of our football season. For the first time in 12 years our school participated in the playoffs. During these 12 years there was one losing streak which covered twenty–seven games. Our team showed the student body and community the results of teamwork against many odds, both on and off the field. This alone removed much of the tension which existed before our second and tenth games.

These are some of the methods used in trying to unify our student body. They were honest efforts. In some cases misinformation and misunderstanding still prevailed and the cry of prejudice could be heard from both white and black.

A call for a faculty study to review and update the curriculum was made to our guidance committee by the counselors. This study was requested primarily in the vocational fields and was asked to be aimed at the college bound as well as the non–college bound. Each department was asked to investigate the possible vocational courses which could be covered within their framework. The following suggestions were made only as possible examples:

A. Computer science and Pre–flight Aeronautics

B. Transportation and industry

C. Occupational crafts and home–hobby arts within industrial education.

D. Distributive education and co–operative office education.

E. Revision of some English, math, science, and social studies to coincide with those suggested courses already mentioned.

F. College prep curriculum based upon a survey made of 1964 graduating classes of New Iberia and Henderson Senior High Schools.

The survey would come from a follow–up study of the two schools' 1964 graduating class and those who entered in 1960 but did not complete their graduation requirements. This questionnaire was mailed in late December to the members of this class during those two periods.

A placement service was also begun during this year by the guidance department. This was primarily for those who had to work to stay in school but could not qualify for the Neighborhood Youth Corp. Even so, it was open to any and all students. Businesses were contacted and responded extremely well. Even though it probably would have happened without this new service, one of the first jobs filled was for a

drop–out who was placed in the telephone office Boston, Massachusetts. Our waiting list of students at this time is much more than can be handled but much credit must go to Mr. Thompson for his efforts in trying to eliminate this abundance. When you think of it this way, that is, if the program were not successful there would be no waiting list, I'm sure you'll appreciate its success.

The overall purpose which has lead our staff to continue to better our school by now must be obvious. This is to provide more meaningful experiences so that students and teachers will voluntarily concentrate less on black and white and more on gray matter, which in turn will meet education's primary goal – useful citizens.

Mr. Floyd A. Horton

PLANS FOR PROGRESS

There are some good things happening in our schools this year. These changes have come about as a direct result of the total integration of our public school system, and they are benefiting to all of the students.

The merging of two cultures at the educational level should benefit both.

The fact that one of these groups has been denied equal opportunities does not mean that it is less needy, less deserving, or less able to accomplish those tasks which lead to becoming useful citizens.

Our experience has led many of the people involved to the realization that there are more similarities than differences between the black and white parents, the black and white teachers, and the black and white students.

All of the present school activities will continue on more or less the same basis as before with the added advantages of having students necessarily widen their horizons, continue to develop greater understanding and compassion, and begin to refine their qualities of leadership to include a greater variety of followers.

The counselors's two principal goals from this point on will be helping to improve attitudes and helping to up-date the curriculum.

As Mr. Horton stated, the small group discussions inaugurated by counselors in the fall, have provided opportunities for students to react to one another in a controlled situation.

In each subsequent group meeting, more students felt free to express themselves eith less fear of being ostracized by their own race or of being rejected by the other.

In most instances, the teachers present expressed satisfaction at the better understanding resulting from these sessions.

In some instances the teachers themselves became more receptive to the need for changing attitudes to provide the best educational setting.

At the Freshman High School an Interracial Student Guidance Committee made up of 4 black and 8 white students was formed in the fall.

These students were chosen by the counselors with the help of administrators and teachers and the recommendations of the students' former counselors.

The long-range objective is to develop Black and White leaders and followers, who through a common bond of understanding, can work together "to insure domestic tranquillity."

Implementation was achieved through group sessions of separate racial groups followed by a bi-racial session.

These meetings were conducted by the students and recorded for the benefit of counselors and administrators.

Discussions with the students involved and a study of these tapes demonstrate an unusual insight into the basic problems of intergration.

Results indicate that these boys and girls have the desire and the ability to help solve the problems and will do so with encouragement of professional school personnel.

Perhaps the progress made by the students can be illustrated by the rather matter of fact statement made by one young white boy:

"So the school is integrated--so what?--We're all people, aren't we?"

Up to January, the faculty, although working in the same school building, was still more segregated than integrated.

It was at this time that a faculty relations committee consisting of three black and three white faculty members was formed.

These six teachers, chosen carefully for their rationality, integrity, and personality are trying to bring about closer cooperation and more open acceptance among the faculty.

A few of the parents, at the opening of the school year, sent their children to private schools or to non-integrated public schools in other parts of the country.

As the school year progressed, some of these few, realizing that the educational process was organized and orderly, and that the chaos predicted by some extremists would not be permitted to develop, re-enrolled their children in our schools.

So far, none have been removed a second time.

Possibly the most important factor in bringing about some understanding on the part of the parents is the increased acceptance of the integrated school on the part of their children.

There seems to be a greater realization by parents of both races that their children are benefiting from contact with teachers of the opposite race.

One white mother speaking of a Negro teacher said, "We have come to appreciate Mr. Alex's concern for his students and his ability to teach biology."

One Negro mother, while visiting her son's counselor, commented that he is doing better school work than before.

Another Negro mother said that she is delighted at how well her two daughters have accepted the new

situation. "They have adjusted perfectly. There has been no change in the quality of their school work." In addition, these girls have experienced no feeling of rejection while participating in those club activities which are carried on in the homes of white students.

On January 28th, a parents' workshop in guidance was conducted by all of the parish counselors at the Freshman High School. The program consisted of an overview of the work of the counselor, a survey of the parish testing program, and small group seminars on study habits, choosing a vocation, dating privileges, parent–teenage group pressures. Although the attendance at this function was somewhat disappointing, those parents (both black and white) who attended, expressed tremendous appreciation for the efforts being made by school personnel to bring help and understanding to all students and parents in all areas of school life.

In order to point out some ways our school system is improving as a result of integration, some overall plans for progress have been included which are not necessarily counselor–initiated.

A special class has been formed in some elementary schools for those first graders who were not ready for school.

Well–trained and experienced teachers are finding that with the smaller groups and more abundant materials now available, these children will be able to enter first grade this fall adequately equipped to do the work.

More serious thought is being given to bringing into being a vocational–technical school for the non–college bound. The superintendent of education tells us that this school will be ready to operate at 70% capacity this fall.

There will be an expansion of special needs classes for older children who do not have the ability to do regular academic work. The present class can handle only 20 students.

Reading improvement classes have been extended into the ninth grade school where it is hoped many students will be brought up to grade level in basic reading skills.

Perhaps the greatest benefit accruing to the educational system is the realization that our college oriented program has not met the needs of the majority of the students.

At this time development of programs in distributive education, trades and industry, and cooperative office education is receiving prime attention from the faculty and from the administrative and supervisory staff of the school system.

A community advisory committee composed of representatives of commerce and industry in the area, school board members, and the professional staff should do much to develop community acceptance and support.

Over a period of years we expect this expanded program to meet the needs of our students so well that not only will our drop–out rate be reduced, but our graduates will be better prepared to be happy and effective members of society.

As Mrs. Moore––our first speaker––pointed out, the school problem in racial controversy is a small part of the total issue; but we feel that when we have resolved the differences within the schools, we shall have established a firm base for solving some of the other aspects of the problem.

Mrs. Evelyn G. Terrell

CONCLUSION

As you can see from the talks by these five school counselors we have tried to limit the scope of our presentation. We do not want to leave you with the impression that everything is working smoothly–sometimes it is and sometimes it is not.

We have also tried to be as objective as possible. Another one of our limitations has been–what we as counselors could have done–have done–and hope to do. Of course, our actions are governed by administrative decisions and therefore some of these facets have come into our presentation. All in all we want to look at this problem as a challenge, something that we must work at in order to overcome. This is not a time to be complacent but a time for innovation. We will certainly make mistakes but we hope to ultimately arrive at success–the success of preparing young people to live in a changing society.

While the moderator was giving his closing remarks a tape recording of the mixed chorus of New Iberia Senior High School, under the direction of Mrs. Janet Musso, was singing "Let There Be Peace." This group first presented this at their annual Christmas concert and it has since been voted as the class song for the senior class.

Ladies and gentlemen assembled -

We have tried to pack everything we could into our algebraic topic, Education without White Prejudice or Black Power can mean gray matter (or an enlightened young citizenry). We consider the words "white" and "black" as the key words to many of our national problems of which our school problem is just a small part. That the views presented will be diverse is suggested by the panelists whom, I am sure, you have already correctly categorized as White and Black. This also suggests that what we say will reflect to, varying degrees, the attitudes of members of both races. Notwithstanding, this racial difference, we shall try to remain as objective as is humanly possible while incorporating the subjectivity of the background and the environment to which each has been exposed. Our discussion concerns "practicals" that we have tried or will try in our school setting which has undergone such drastic re-organization that we, as counselors, find ourselves in a most enviable position - that of really working in situations alive with personality and racial conflicts, with conventional ideologies and with newly adopted philosophies and prejudices.

We do not claim a monopoly on these - for the tap root of one of the nation's major social problems is embedded in a national environment part of which has deprived a segment of its citizens of the wholesome and nurturing environmental influences that are requisities for "ego" or "self concept" development. We all know how important one's environment is to his development of a desirable self concept which in turn has bearings on his attitudes, values, behavior and goals. A fertile environment, to which more Whites

have been exposed offers a better chance for personal actualization - a sterile one almost compels human beings to become detrimental to a social order to which by nature they want to be contributants. The latter has been the plight of the Black American; many of whom claim this as the impelling reason for their move toward militancy; on the other hand many Whites (feeling more comfortable and more confident in "status quo" situations) adhere to the ideologies and philosophies to which they've been exposed. Neither side fully knows, nor understands the other. Our objective is to try to bring about that knowledge and understanding. This, we feel can be done through cooperation from home, school, and community each of which the students are a part. As counselors, our job is not to build a mold to which inflexible standards have been set in an effort to impose White subculture on Blacks, or Black subculture on Whites - we shall not (as Procrustes) try to fit each to a mold; we shall strive toward stimulating a desire for each to take advantage of the chance America offers (as Thomas Wolfe says) "to become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him".

We shall endeavor to evaluate causal factors, not as Black or White; but as human needs, human interests, human assets and liabilities - of human beings!! Our aim - to eliminate any damaging concept of <u>white</u> or <u>black</u> - and substitute one that will stimulate each to develop use of his <u>gray</u> matter; so that he might effect change and thereby derive benefits from a newly created "humane" society. Of necessity, our first major effort must be to become knowledgeable about the "new" clients with whom we must work. Our previous experience with youth of our own race - as well as our relatively

small community - enable us to spot those whose economical, psychological, or social deprivation could result in aggressive, explosive, reaction. When the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals handed down its decision, we anticipated some aggressive reaction from both sides. Also knowing the students as we do, and reaffirming our conjectures by talking with students on our campuses, we came to realize that the Black students as well as the White were stunned by the decision and were extremely reluctant to comply. Everything in the lives of each group had geared them toward educational situations that were traditional. The decision portended that the ego of most would be exposed to situational pressures for which it had no coping or adaptive defenses. Thus "stress" resulted.

With David Mechanic in his Students Under Stress, we define stress as the "discomfiting response of persons in particular situations, which motivate those therein emeshed to strike out to reduce or th eliminate the causal factors. In social behavioral studies, stress has been used to characterize physical, social, and cultural conditions that can be discomfiting to those involved. Stress situations might include battle conditions, impending surgery, rapid cultural change, a difficult personal experience, frustration, failure, etc. If we accept this assumption; then we can conclude that for many of our counselees, as well as for some instructors and parents, our new school reorganization was and still is, a stress situation.

To be adaptive to a stress situation or to be self-directive, one's ego needs defense mechanisms with which through use and success, it has become accustomed. The egos of our clients, never

having been exposed to these identical situations, had no such psychological defenses - thus the tactics, strategies, and techniques they used to deal with these unique experiences were (and still are) for some - disastrous to their welfare and jeopardizing to that of others. Their coping behavior, the final criterion for judging adaption just isn't acceptable!!

We counselors recognize this dilemma - and our reaction, our plans, and our guidelines are attempts to effect progress and growth out of chaos. We do not plead guilty of being "encapsulated" counselors, who are so enclosed in a traditional hardened shell of ideologies, radical philosophies, and out-moded prejudices that we will not or can not work with each client according to his individuality; we do claim that as a professional team of behavioral scientists - and as individuals with a deep sense of duty to our roles and responsibilities - with integrity, with eminent pride in our race, but with a deeper appreciation, for individual worth - which is the essence of Americanism - we <u>can</u> and <u>will</u> use all the tools and techniques at our command to effect realization of our topic. We are working now, and we shall continue to do everything we can to establish a total educational and sub-cultural environment that will be most conducive to the optimum development of each child.

Our contentions are that:

1. Our school problem is a stress situation with which both Black and White educators must cooperatively cope.
2. Education is the discipline that has the major responsibility to assure a chance for maximum development of the American masses; - it must stimulate an awareness and appreciation of dignity and also respect for individuality or uniqueness.
3. We can not, as Richard L. Evans says in his essay on <u>Equality</u>, use the Procrustean theory to eliminate differences among men - this would be as preposterous as our trying to make all trees in the forest the same height by cutting the taller ones down to the

level of the shorter, or by pulling the shorter trees up to the level of the taller. In this unnatural process, we would strifle progress. We will encourage provisions of opportunities for each student to rise to those heights to which his energies and abilities can take him, and enrich the lives of all to the end that progress may continue; and thereby all will find benefit.

4. Our hardest task will be to change the "status quo" beliefs and attitudes of both Black and White in relation to "self" and to persons of the opposite race.-----

This, I hope, has given you contextual background information on how we view our problem, how we feel about it, and what guidelines we shall use in dealing with it.

Our touchstone will be a school citizenry who will aspire to be not only recipients of the "goodies" of American democracy but also contributants to its principles and its ideals, because they will learn, understand, and accept with Kossuth, the idea that "it is on the sound education of the people that the security and destiny of every nation rest."

Mrs Alma P. Moore